

Screen Use and Your Kids



We all have days when everything is too much and the television, computer, mobile device or video game becomes our best friend. That's okay, but too much screen time can cause problems for our kids and us. When children watch screens they put off developing important skills and are often difficult to manage after using screens.



How much screen time is okay?

- Current research suggests:
 - No screens for children under 18 months.
 - Limit screen time to ½ hour for children 18 months – 2 years and use screens together.
 - Limit screen time to 1 hour per day for 2 – 5 year olds and use screens together.
 - Over 6 year olds should have consistent limits on screen time but a specific time limit has not been recommended.
 - Avoid any screen use in the hour before bed and keep screen devices out of bedrooms so they don't interfere with sleep.

Tips for limiting screen time

- Consistency!
Have a regular pattern of screen use and stick to it. Kids will learn the pattern and stop asking outside of those times. For example: Friday movie night, Saturday morning cartoons, an hour before dinner or after the kids are ready for school in the morning.
- Take time out when you need to.
Sometimes kids can nag for screen use, particularly when they've been used to having more time. Taking time out for yourself to get away from a nagging child may be very important, even if that's only a brief holiday in your mind.
- Don't let nagging result in screen time.
If nagging works for them to get what they want sometimes, they'll try it every time.
- Create a box of activity ideas.
Have your kids help fill a container with alternative activities to screens, such as a board game, cooking, riding a bike, art & craft, etc. When they say "I'm bored, I want to watch TV", remind them that there are plenty of ideas in the Activity box.



For more information check out: www.raisingchildren.net.au